

GRANTEE MONITORING

Grantee Name	<i>Birthline, Inc.</i>
Location/Address	<i>1411 West St. Germain Street, St. Cloud, MN 56301</i>
Date and Location of Site Visit	<i>Friday, October 21, 2016 at Birthline's office.</i>
Grantee Participants	<i>Michael D. Stalboerger: Executive Director</i>
MDH Participant(s)	<i>Mary Ottman: Positive Alternatives Grant Manager</i>
Grant Agreement #/PO #	

PURPOSE:

In accordance with the MDH Policy 238.01 Grantee Monitoring, MDH will conduct at least one monitoring visit per grant period on all state grants of over \$50,000, and at least annual monitoring visits on grants of over \$250,000.

The purpose of the grant monitoring visit is to review and ensure progress against the grants' goals, to address any problems or issues before the end of the grant period and to build rapport between the state agency and the grantees. This visit may cover topics such as statutory compliance; challenges faced by the grantee, modifications made to the grant program, program outcomes, grantee policies and procedures, grantee governance, and training and technical assistance needs.

The findings or information obtained through this monitoring activity will be used:

- To ascertain how MDH program funds are being utilized
- To provide targeted technical assistance needs
- To improve program implementation performance
- To suggest other training needs
- In future funding decisions

OVERVIEW

1. Is the Grantee's non-profit 501(c) 3 status current?

Yes. Birthline, Inc. 501(c) 3 status is current.

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2. Does the Grantee have a central file containing the official records for this grant agreement and/or amendment?

Yes.

3. Where is this central file located?

The file is located in the Executive Director's office.

4. Who is responsible for this central file?

The Executive Director (Mike Stalboerger) is ultimately responsible for the central file.

5. Does the central file include

- The grant proposal? **Yes**
- The award letter? **Yes**
- The signed grant agreement and any/all amendments? **Yes**
- Any/all requests and/or approvals for scope/budget changes? **Yes**
- The work plan? **Yes**
- Any/all payment requests (invoices)? **Yes**
- Any/all signed subcontracts? **Not applicable (no subcontracts)**
- Any/all Progress Reports? **Yes**

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Does the organization meet all reporting requirements as outlined in the grant agreement and/or amendment?

Yes, Birthline meets the reporting requirements as outlined in the grant agreement.

2. Are expenditure reports submitted timely and accurately?

Yes, Birthline submits timely and accurately expenditure reports.

3. Are progress reports submitted with all required information and in a timely manner?

Yes, all reports are submitted with the required information and in a timely manner.

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CONTRACTUAL

1. Does the Grantee have written policies or procedures addressing use of contractors and/or subcontractors?
Birthline does not have written policies or procedures as Birthline does not use any contractors and/or subcontractors.
2. Were any sub-contractors paid from the MDH grant required to sign a contractual agreement outlining services to be rendered, duration of engagement, and pay rate?
Not applicable (no subcontracts).
3. Was the contractual agreement(s) reviewed and approved by MDH before implementation?
Not applicable (no subcontracts).

PERSONNEL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES OF THE GRANTEE

1. Are time distribution records (e.g., time-sheets) maintained to show how employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind to, the MDH grant and who work on multiple projects/programs spend their time?
Yes, Birthline has time-sheets that have a breakdown of hours worked as it relates to the grant funded positions.
2. Do personnel and/or payroll records show dates of hire/termination, immigration status if applicable, actual hours of time worked, leave time, federal and state programs worked on, and earning for all employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind, to the MDH grant?
Yes, Birthline personnel and payroll records indicate hours worked and earnings for employees covered by the grant. Birthline utilizes the payroll services of Miller, Welle, Heiser, & Co., LTD. Located in St. Cloud, MN.
3. Does the Grantee have policies and procedures in writing regarding:
 - Payroll?
 - Travel?
 - Overtime?
 - Timesheets?
 - Taxes?
 - Purchasing?
 - Compensated time off?**Yes, Birthline maintains Organizational Policies & Procedures addressing the above areas.**
4. Are employees time sheets approved? **Yes**
By whom (what position)? **Reviewed for mathematical accuracy by the Sr. Administrative Specialist before being approved by the Executive Director**
By the Executive Director? **Yes, Michael D. Stalboerger**

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5. Does the Grantee's payroll preparation and distribution involve more than one employee?
Yes, as stated above. Birthline's Sr. Administrative Specialist will review time-sheets for numerical accuracy prior to forwarding them to Birthline's Executive Director for approval. The ED will then forward the total hours worked to MWH Payroll Services for the processing of payroll.
6. Does an authorized official approve all checks before being signed?
Yes, as stated above the ED reviews and signs-off on all hours prior to payroll submission. All current Birthline employees receive electronic payroll deposits.

Additional Comments:

Birthline has undergone a transition in leadership this summer with the longtime ED transitioning out of the leadership role within the agency. The new ED has been working diligently to become familiar with the Positive Alternatives Grant and is leaning heavily on program staff to assist in ensuring that the grant procedures and expectations are met.

There also has been a transition of roles and responsibilities as it relates to the client advocate position with the previous CA transitioning from her regularly scheduled duties to focus on time with her young family. Additional team members have increased their hours and roles to ensure that clients are receiving services as needed.

The entire Birthline team is dedicated to ensuring that our clients received relevant, factual, and quality information and services. There is an increased level of excitement within the organization as Birthline continues to grow and expand services, so that our clients may benefit.

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PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

Please use this space to answer all questions.

Program History

- When was your program started? Why was it started?
Birthline began as an organization in 1972 and was originally formed under a Birthright charter. Early in the 1980s the organization went independent and is now an affiliate with Heart Beat International. Birthline's Stepping Stones program began in 2003 as a means to provide resources, education, and support to those facing an unintended or crisis pregnancy. The primary goal of the program is to ensure that all women are given the opportunity to achieve the services necessary to carry their pregnancy to term, and care for their infant after birth.
- What need does your program fulfill?
Birthline's Stepping Stones program fulfills basic needs for pregnant women and their children. Through program support, education, resources, and guidance in exploring options available to them, it is the desire of the program to ensure that all women have the opportunity to choose carrying their pregnancy to term and caring for the baby after birth. This program fulfills the opportunity for women and men to learn necessary skills that will assist them in being armed with tools and resources to care for their child during the first years of life.
- How has the program grown or changed since its beginning?
The Stepping Stones Program has grown and changed since the beginning based upon the needs of the population in which it serves. The current population of the program requires Birthline to provide information and referrals based upon the greater basic needs of our population as it relates to housing and well-being. An increased number of clients are facing issues related to addiction in pregnancy, and homeless in support of their pregnancy. As a result, the Stepping Stones Program has become more individualized within the goal setting areas and the program has become more "client centered," tailored to each individual client.

Grantee's Target population

- Who does the organization primarily serve?
Services are offered to pregnant women and parents of infants under the age of 12 months. We also serve fathers of the baby when the relationship is identified as safe and supportive.

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- What is the program's demographic and geographic coverage?
Geographically, Birthline serves Central Minnesota and generally within a one hour radius of the St. Cloud metro area. Typically, the majority (84%) of our clients came from Stearns, Benton and Sherburne Counties; with the remaining from Wright, Morrison, Mille Lacs and other central MN locations. Birthline has seen an increase in the amount of referrals through the area residential treatment center that serves pregnant women/mothers in the area.
- Review recent Demographic reporting.
Over the course of the previous 12 months (July 2015- June 2016) 322 new clients utilized our services.
Age Range: 37% of clients served fell within the age range of 20-24, with 29% of clients being between the ages of 25-29. 11% were 30-34, 9% were 35 plus. 11% were under the age of 19 (6% being 15-17 & 5% being 18-19). 2% of the clientele during this period of time did not indicate their age, falling into the unknown category.
Pregnancy Status: The majority of women (65%) were in their second or third trimester when they sought initial support. Our objective is to reach women early enough so our prenatal vitamins, medical referrals, and education can have the greatest impact in supporting healthy pregnancy outcomes. Specifically, 26% were in their first trimester; 33% in second trimester; 32% third trimester; 2% post-partum; and 3% unknown.
Additional statistics: The vast majority of the women identified as not married (79%), with 20% married and 1% unknown. The race of clients served is somewhat diverse. Just over half of the women are White/Caucasian (57%), with 15% African American, 13% Somali, 4% American Indian, 4% Asian, 5% other/multi, and the remaining 2% unknown. Only 3% defined themselves as having Hispanic ethnicity. Nearly all of the women served were living at or below poverty level.

Leadership and Governance

- Effective Board: How many board members currently serve, who are they?
Birthline is governed a current 10 member Board of Directors. (Organizational bylaws indicate that a full Board of Directors is 12 members.) Membership consists of representatives from the medical profession, education and business community, former clients, and other stakeholders. Renee Anderson (President), George Sjogren (Vice President), Mark Berg-Arnold (Treasurer), Peg Imholte (Secretary), Nadine Pullis, Fr. Jerry Dalseth, Lynn Schnettler, Sheila Leavell, Elisa Schneider, Dr. Bob Stocker.

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- How often do they meet? How are they informed of organization's progress and challenges?

The board meets monthly to provide high-level oversight, vision, and strategic direction to ensure the mission is carried out and best management practices are utilized.

Members also serve on committees that address key initiatives as defined in our multi-year strategic plan. Each member commits to a three-year term, and may serve a second term for a total of six years. The Executive Director actively serves on the board in a non-voting capacity. In addition, a non-voting advisory committee is utilized to obtain guidance and support when needed in specific areas not represented on the governing board.

- How supportive is the Board of the program?

The Board of Directors is highly supportive of the Stepping Stones Program and takes great pride in Birthline providing these services to our clients.

- How is the program staffed? Who is responsible for the supervision of grant staff?

The Stepping Stones Program is staffed by Jolene Theis, Stepping Stones Program Coordinator and Desiree St. John, Stepping Stones Program Mentor. The Executive Director, Mike Stalboerger is responsible for the oversight of grant staff.

- How are staff evaluated on their performance? How long have PA staff been employed there?

Jolene has been with the Stepping Stones Program since September of 2012, and Desiree has been with the Stepping Stones Program since June of 2014. They are evaluated yearly on their performance with monthly and weekly check-ins.

- How are staff background checks done?

Staff background checks are completed at the time of hire through an outsourced firm, hired to check background information.

- What is your organization's policy on complaints for staff and clients?

Birthline staff and clients have the right to file a written complaint to the Executive Director of the agency, unless the complaint involves said position. In that case, the complaint may be filed with the Board of Directors. The complaint will be reviewed and a response will be issued in writing within three business days of receiving the written complaint. The Executive Director will locate and review this policy in written form.

Budget

- Does the current budget reflect your work plan activities?

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Yes, the current budget reflects the work plan activities.

Is the budget accurate for the project size/scope?

Yes, the current budget is accurate for the project size/scope.

- Do you have any challenges with the budget or invoicing?

No, not at this time.

- Has your Financial Reconciliation taken place?

It has not yet been scheduled.

- If you have an elevated risk designation, and/ or your Financial Reconciliation report cited any concerns, these will be discussed.

Birthline does not have an elevated risk or any concerns cited at this time.

Review Work Plan including:

Partners

- If applicable: how are people referred to the program? Are there any barriers encountered with referral sources? What is your most common referral source?

Clients are referred to the Stepping Stones Program through the county Public Health office, other county offices, local physicians, other pregnancy centers, and word of mouth. During the current calendar year, 38% of our referrals came from word of mouth (family/friends), with 18% being referred from the local treatment center.

Birthline does receive accurate referrals as Birthline has been around as an agency for 45 years. The Stepping Stones Program is a major reason for the referrals received.

- Challenges with partners or specific counties?

Birthline has a strong working relationship with area partners and counties, yet there has been a shift in the timeframe in which referrals are received. A majority of our referrals are in the second or third trimester of pregnancy, which increases the drop off rate of clients not returning after they have their baby. Earlier engagement and referrals would be extremely beneficial for the program.

Work Plan

- Review your 2016 – 19 grant application's description of the program you are asking to be funded. On your work plan note the services and activities you said you would provide and the number of clients you would serve.
- **Prepare a short summary of your current program(s) and the number of clients being served. Birthline is actively carrying out the work plan objectives on a daily basis within the program. Birthline continues to provide education and hands on learning through the car seat program, safe sleep program, and other parenting**

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educational activities such as but not limited to baby boot camp, childbirth education, doula services, etc. Birthline provides education and employment assistance, life skills educational programming, mental health referrals, medical services, and other case management services. How does what you describe in the application compare with what you are currently providing? **Birthline provides services as described in the work plan and is continuously monitoring the effectiveness of these services with the desire to instill lasting changes.** Have any programs and/or activities or services been added or removed? **No programs or services have been removed or added from the initial work plan at this point in time.** Have the number of clients being served per quarter decreased or increased since June 2016? Is there anything in particular you want to share about your current program to explain its current status?

Birthline continues to see a decline in the number of clients served during the summer months. While the attribution of why this is so is not yet reinforced with data, it is believed that the nice summer weather plays a role.

- Do you anticipate making any changes to the 2017-18 Work Plan? If so, in what way and for what reasons?

Birthline does not anticipate making changes to the 2017-2018 work plan at this time.

Participants:

- What type of outreach does the organization put into action? What is working well? What are more the challenging aspects to finding or retaining clients?

Birthline engages in outreach activities such as providing information, flyers, and rack cards to area agencies and programs that serve individuals experiencing pregnancy. Birthline will begin a county "tour" where a representative will attend area county department meetings to provide information and answer questions about the Stepping Stones program and resources available. Birthline continues to address the challenge of client no-shows, and clients who do not return to complete the program. This is influenced by the amount of referrals received from an area chemical dependency treatment facility.

Data:

- How is program data collected and by whom? Is data collected useful to agency?

Birthline Stepping Stones staff collects data through paperwork completed at client appointments and views this data in a framework to determine additional

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ways to serve clients. This data is useful to see trends and how the demographics of our clients change. An area of revision within data collection revolves around the use of Birthline's software to ensure accurate and efficient data is collected for review.

To simplify data collection, MDH suggests using a data collection system designed for PRCs such as eKyros or Way Cool if at all possible.

- Anything we can do to help or simplify data collection?

It is felt that MDH simplifies the data collection process.

Review Evaluation

- Your 2015-16 Evaluation Report Summary will be discussed (If you were a past grantee).
- Your 2016-17 Evaluation Plan will be reviewed. Any suggestions provided in your 2015-16 Report Summary should be included in the plan, if you are continuing a similar evaluation. If you are planning a new evaluation, details will be discussed. Do you have any questions on your evaluation?

No questions at this point in time, and a discussion around the evaluation plan will be helpful.

Birthline will be conducting their 2016-17 Evaluation project on reducing alcohol consumption of clients. A discussion of self-reporting followed with the potential issues that may surface.

Miscellaneous

- Anything else you would like to share?

Birthline is appreciative of the support (and patience) of grant staff as this summer has been a time of transition for Birthline.

- Anything else we haven't asked?

Not at this time.

What can we do to help?

- Trainings and Grantee meetings useful for grantee? Any topic suggestions?

Training and grantee meetings are extremely useful and at this time, there are no specific topic suggestions.

- Feedback or suggestions for the state?

None at this time.

- Is there any way MDH can assist you to better equip your success in the Positive Alternatives Grant Program?

Birthline greatly appreciates the assistance received to carry out the requirements and objectives of the grant.

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Summary:

Birthline has been a Positive Alternative grantee since the beginning of the grant program. They have a well-established pregnancy and parenting education program in place along with many good partnerships and relationships with community referral organizations throughout their area of service. Client service numbers have been consistent and are meeting the expectations of their grant application and work plan. New staff changes including the Executive Director are giving the organization a fresh new look by examining existing programs and operational procedures for the Center.

Topics addressed during this site visit included board development. It was agreed that both staff and the board may benefit with continuing training in this area. It was also suggested that the Center would like to initiate a "Fatherhood Project" or work with local groups who would like to pursue this program. MDH would be happy to provide assistance if needed with this project and highly encourages this initiative. Birthline is also working closer with the local chemical dependency programs in providing programming and assistance to referred clients from these type of programs. This has been a local area of need that has recently been fully addressed.

Birthline has been an organized and responsible Positive Alternative grantee. I look forward to our continuing partnership with the Positive Alternative grant program.

Date: October 31, 2016

Grant Manager: Mary Ottman